Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-12 (withdrawn)

13. (presently amended) A stereoscopic microscope comprising:

a common close-up optical system that faces an object, said close-up optical system having one and only one optical axis;

a pair of imaging optical systems that take object light rays passing through the different regions of said close-up optical system, respectively, to form a pair of images, the optical axes of said imaging optical systems being parallel to the optical axis of said close-up optical system;

an image taking device that captures said images formed on an image taking surface thereof,

wherein said common close-up optical system comprises a first lens and a second lens on the side of the object, wherein said first lens is prior to said second lens on the side of the object, and wherein said first lens has a negative power and said second lens has a positive power,

wherein said close-up optical system satisfies the following condition (1);

(1) $f_A > 500$

where f_A is a focal length (unit: mm) of the close-up optical system, and

wherein said first lens and said second lens can vary f_A for focusing said close-up optical system.

14. (original) The stereoscopic microscope according to claim 13, wherein said imaging optical system comprises:

a pair of zoom optical systems that take object light rays passing through the different regions of said close-up optical system, respectively, to form a pair of primary images, the optical axes of said zoom optical systems being parallel to the optical axis of said close-up optical system;

a pair of field stops that are arranged at the positions of said primary images;

a pair of relay optical systems that relay said primary images to form a pair of secondary images; and

an inter-axis distance reducing element that brings the object light rays from said relay optical systems close to each other.

Claim 15 (withdrawn)

16. (new) The stereoscopic microscope of Claim 13 wherein said common close-up optical system collimates the object light rays from the object of which image is to be captured by said image taking device.

17. (new) The stereoscopic microscope of Claim 13 wherein said second lens is movable along its optical axis for focusing.